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**Prehistoric Archaeology and the Old Testament.** By H. J. DUK-  
INFELD ASTLEY. Edinburgh: T. & T Clark; New York:  
Scribners, 1908. Pp. 314. \$2.

The author delivered the Donnellan Lecture Series before the University of Dublin in 1906-7. These lectures have been enlarged and are now published under the above title. The first three chapters are given to a brief sketch of the course and progress of the modern scientific view of the earth and man, under the respective titles of "Astronomy and Geology," "Biology and the Theory of Evolution," and "The Antiquity of Man." The fourth chapter deals with "The Origin and Development of Religious Belief," the fifth with "The Religion of Old Israel," and the sixth with "Anthropology and the Christian Revelation." In this way the author has endeavored "to show that in the results attained by a study of the ancient Scriptures of Israel under the light of the higher criticism, a method may be discovered which shall enable science and religion to meet and clasp hands."

The author has undertaken a timely task. Modern science has come with a new knowledge and a new method. Both have revolutionized religious thought. As each individual interprets God in the light of experience and environment, so the duty of each generation is to reinterpret God in terms of its advanced knowledge of life and the universe. Thus the present scientific age has altered in marked degree our conception of God. In the first chapters the author has briefly detailed the facts of science so far attained, consequent upon which have come those new ideas concerning God and his relation to the world and man. The teachings of astronomy, geology, and biology are unanimous and emphatic as to the history of the world and the life upon it. These are utterly irreconcilable with a literal interpretation of the early Genesis records. It is incumbent therefore to understand what the true value of the Bible is:

As the Abbé Loisy has justly said, the science of the Bible is the science of the age in which it was written; and to expect to find in it supernatural information on points of scientific fact is to mistake its entire purpose. . . . Upon the false science of antiquity the author has grafted a true and dignified representation of the relation of the world to God. It is not its office to forestall scientific discovery; it neither comes into collision with science nor needs reconciliation with it. It must be read in the light of the age in which it was written; and while the spiritual teaching so vividly expressed by it can never lose its freshness or value, it must on its material side be interpreted in accordance with the place which it holds in the history of Semitic cosmological speculation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Driver, *Genesis*, p. 33.

This the church has not done. It has never regarded the spiritual situation created by the new knowledge. The scheme of dogma which has claimed to be the creed of Christendom received its deathblow at the hands of a priest (Copernicus) in the middle of the sixteenth century, for every one of the doctrines which make up that creed fits, like a picture into a frame, the universe as known to ancient and mediaeval times. That scheme is wholly out of place in the enlarged universe which is taught to our children in every secular school in the land. This is what makes the orthodox creed seem to the average man so much "in the air." It grew out of and is dependent upon that exploded scheme of the universe. . . . A new age of faith will come, when the religious instincts of devout souls will turn with joy to the new knowledge. Then faith will not be dissonant with things, as many feel it to be now, but harmonious, because it will take form from the larger universe in which it dwells.<sup>2</sup>

The contribution of science to religion comprises also a scientific method for the study. Though dealing with the religion of Israel the author rightly estimates the import of anthropology in this connection. This is highly commendable, for like "all the nations of antiquity, Israel starts from ideas rooted in animism, fetichism, and polytheism, which have come down from neolithic times." But Israel finally becomes separated from her neighbors because there was

a motive force in Israel which carried her forward to a point which the surrounding nations never attained. This force resided in the prophets. But neither in its origin was prophetism unique. The spirit which, under the guiding hand of God, issued in the prophets of Israel is inherent in all primitive religions, just as is also the spirit which led up to the priest; but the prophet is older than the priest, and this fact, which comparative religion teaches, furnishes an external proof of the truth of Wellhausen's dictum as to Israel, that "the Prophets preceded the Law."

According to the scientific method the author gives a *résumé* of the growth of Israel's religion, and an attempt to locate the sacred writings in their proper sequence of time and religious progress. Some changes might be suggested in the order proposed and the reasons assigned therefor. Thus Ruth is given a place in the canon, "because it contained a beautiful picture of life in Old Israel, and bore upon the origin of the family of David." Was not Ruth like Jonah, written to combat the narrow particularistic spirit of the post-exilic community in Jerusalem?

One illustration of the author's conclusions must suffice. Of the theological dogma of the Fall and Original Sin he says,

The sciences of prehistoric archaeology and anthropology leave no room for the story of the "Fall" as it is told in Gen., chap. 3, and theology has no

<sup>2</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1906.

need of it as a record of literal historical facts. The so-called "Fall" represents in a picture what takes place in the case of each individual human being as he emerges from the ignorance and selfishness of childhood into the self-consciousness of the adult, or rather the maturing, personality. . . . Thus sin is, in its essence, the hereditary tendency or bias toward evil, i. e., wrong-doing, through the infraction or abuse of laws implanted in their very nature, of a race advancing toward perfection but not yet perfect.

In one feature the book lacks the spirit of its theme. It frequently breaks forth into an apologetic for "the church" too dogmatic in spirit for its environment. The author can go so far as to say of other bodies that in separating themselves from the church's system, and aiming at what they consider a more spiritual Christianity divorced from material adjuncts and aids, our nonconformist brethren are depriving themselves of that in which the true Christian life consists. Emphasizing individualism and denying or ignoring the social solidarity of mankind which is secured in the church, they are in danger of losing all real spirituality.

Thus the author occasionally changes his theme from science and religion to science and the church. Despite this the book is lively, fresh, practical, and helpful.

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